

Exhibit A



**TESTIMONY OF THE MAYOR'S OFFICE
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

November 17, 2021

I. Introduction

Good afternoon. My name is Ben Furnas and I am the Director of the Mayor's Office of Climate and Sustainability. I am joined by Anthony Fiore, the Deputy Commissioner and Chief Energy Management Officer at the Department of Citywide Administrative Services and Gina Bocra, the Chief Sustainability Officer at the Department of Buildings. I want to thank Chair Gennaro and members of the committee for this opportunity to testify on building electrification and Introductions 2317, 2196, and 2091.

II. Climate Crisis

A recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that unless there are immediate and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the world will continue to see increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and heat waves that would imperil global agriculture and health. New Yorkers are already too familiar with the serious consequences of extreme weather, most recently managing the impacts of Tropical Storm Henri and Hurricane Ida.

As world leaders convened in Glasgow for the U.N. climate change negotiations over the past weeks, it was clear that cities are leading the way in the fight against climate change. The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides support for major new investments in decarbonization and signals that cities will be critical in our country's work against climate change.

Cities are taking ambitious action to confront the climate crisis and build a green and just world, and New York City is leading the charge.

Together with Council, we have taken bold action to cut greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors as fast as possible, including requiring buildings to undergo retrofits, transitioning to renewable energy, accelerating the shift to cleaner modes of transportation, and creating green jobs; but there is more we can do and we must take every opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for our city and our planet.

III. Electric Buildings

New York City is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

The fossil fuels used to heat, cool, and power our buildings are responsible for nearly 70% of greenhouse gas emissions in New York City. They also emit a wide range of air pollutants that harm the health of New Yorkers, especially our most vulnerable.

New York City has already been a global leader in building emission reductions, notably through the passage and implementation of the Climate Mobilization Act and its centerpiece, Local Law 97, which places caps on greenhouse gas emissions from existing large buildings.

With the legislation being proposed here today, we can lead again.

The next generation of buildings is electric. Setting ambitious targets for new buildings to be built without reliance on fossil fuels presents an opportunity for us to shape the future of our city and lead the world in developing the high-efficiency, electric buildings of the future.

To meet our carbon-neutrality goals, improve air quality, and create a city that is cleaner and greener, it is time for new buildings to be built without on-site combustion of fossil fuels. Gas or oil heating systems lock buildings into fossil fuel infrastructure for years to come – years that we do not have to waste.

All-electric buildings are a solution to improving the climate and the health of our residents. Buildings with efficient electric heating and cooling have existed for decades and are currently being built all over the world, including in New York City. The technology is reliable and functional, even in very cold weather.

Cold climate air source heat pumps provide clean electric interior comfort well-suited to New York's weather. These systems offer efficient cooling, heating from temperatures below -10°F and operate at more than double the efficiency of resistance or gas systems.

These benefits to New Yorkers come with a reasonable price tag. The cost to construct a new all-electric building is relatively similar to that of constructing a new building that heats with gas, and because the building can be designed climate-friendly from the beginning, they can avoid costly retrofits down the line as we race towards carbon neutrality.

The International Energy Agency reports that globally, almost 180 million heat pumps were used in 2020, and that to reach net zero emissions, heat pump use will need to increase significantly. The IEA has also noted the importance of setting a date certain when new buildings will be electric buildings in order to keep the world on what they describe as the “narrow but achievable” path to carbon neutrality by mid-century.

Electrifying buildings to cut greenhouse gas emissions is also in line with recommendations by the New York State's Climate Action Council.

In 2021, the City conducted a study entitled *Pathways to Carbon Neutral NYC*, in partnership with our utilities Con Edison and National Grid. The study found that electrifying heating and domestic hot water systems can provide immediate emissions benefits in efficient buildings, even with today's grid, and that these buildings get greener as the grid gets cleaner.

In 2019, New York State passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). The CLCPA committed to 100% zero-emission electricity by 2040. Even today, before the projected increase in renewable energy, a building drawing electricity from the grid creates lower greenhouse gas emissions and less air pollution than one burning fossil fuels on-site for heat.

IV. Assist Building Owners

We are committed to working with building owners to provide them with the support they need to shift away from fossil fuels buildings. We have already launched a number of programs providing personalized, technical assistance and connecting building owners and operators with financing.

The NYC Accelerator is a \$33M commitment to support a rapid transition toward decarbonizing our city's buildings – including electrification and other alternative technologies to reduce emissions from existing building system.

As part of this citywide effort, the Accelerator has expanded its training and technical assistance offerings to support high-performance new construction electric buildings that will set a new precedent for the future of our homes, schools, and offices.

We're also ready to support these changes with financing. Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing gives building-owners access to loans with no upfront capital with payments that are tied to the property tax bill.

I'm also pleased to share that starting in January, thanks to legislation passed by the City Council, PACE financing will be available for new construction of electric buildings. We believe this shift will continue to grow the electric building industry in New York, support the next generation of high-efficiency buildings without fossil fuels on site, and would help developers and builders comply with Int. 2317.

V. Legislation

Now I'll speak briefly about each of the bills that are being heard today.

a. Int. 2317 (in relation to the use of substances with certain emissions profiles)

We are excited to testify today on Int. 2317. This bill represents a major shift in how new buildings will use energy to provide heating and cooling, and we support this critical climate action. We are looking forward to working with the Council to ensure that the bill is as ambitious as possible, while still being achievable for builders and developers throughout the City.

b. Int. 2091 (in relation to studying the feasibility of electrifying existing buildings)

Int. 2091 would require a study to determine the feasibility of electrifying existing buildings. The NYC Accelerator does a lot of work to assist existing buildings in efforts to electrify. We would like to continue to work with buildings to eliminate, as much as possible, fossil fuels on site. The bill as currently drafted adds this study to the Long-Term Energy Plan. We believe this is an important topic that warrants further detailed study, but the Long-Term Energy Plan is well underway, so we are happy to discuss with the Council an alternative mechanism to get this work done.

c. Int. 2196 (in relation to a study of the health impacts from gas stoves)

Int. 2196 would require a study on the health impacts of gas stoves and a recommendation as to whether it would be appropriate to phase-out gas stoves. Robust research exists on the health impacts of gas stoves at the national level, and we support producing a report on the existing research in this

space – at both the national and local level and inclusive of equity implications – to inform policy recommendations and implementation in residential settings.

VI. Conclusion

We look forward to working with the Council on leading the way. Thank you. I am now happy to answer any questions.